

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5063

As Amended by House, April 5, 2007

Title: An act relating to removing gender references.

Brief Description: Removing gender references.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Fairley, Rockefeller, Kline, Schoesler, Keiser, Parlette, Kauffman, Fraser and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 1/15/07 [DP].
Passed Senate: 2/16/07, 41-1.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Clements, Ranking Minority Member; Franklin, Holmquist, Murray and Prentice.

Staff: Sherry McNamara (786-7402)

Background: Since 1983, state law requires all statutes be written in gender-neutral terms, unless a specification of gender is intended.

Summary of Engrossed Bill: Gender-specific terms are changed to be gender neutral in several chapters of the RCW. For example, "firemen" is changed to "firefighters" and "policemen" is changed to "police officers."

The Code Reviser's Office is required to recommend legislation correcting gender-specific references by December 1, 2007, and to advise the Legislature of gender-specific language changes that would result in substantive changes of the law.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The change in the statute reflects the make-up of not only Seattle public safety officers but officers statewide. The terminology change is

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more inclusive, not exclusive, and is more accurate of officers serving today. It is the best thing for the future, for up and coming female firefighters. It is a great sign of respect.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Sally Clark, Seattle City Council; Theresa Purtell, Seattle Fire Local 27; Kelly Fox, Washington State Council of Fire Fighters.

House Amendment(s): Removes the change from warehousemen to warehouse workers. Warehousemen is a defined term in chapter 22.09 RCW that means a person who owns, operates, or controls a warehouse in the state. It does not refer to a person who works in a warehouse; changing the term to warehouse workers would change the policy and effect of the bill.

Changes statutory references from materialmen to the gender neutral material supplier.

Requires the Code Reviser, in consultation with the Statute Law Committee, to develop and implement a plan to correct gender-specific references in the code, making annual recommendations to the Legislature, with completion by June 30, 2015.